THE REFUGEE:

OR THE

NARRATIVES OF FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA.

RELATED BY THEMSELVES,

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY AND CONDITION OF THE COLORED POPULATION OF UPPER CANADA.

BY

BENJAMIN DREW.

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way of their going to meetings. I believe that the slaveholders know that that they are guilty in holding slaves. If the slaves were all set at liberty, I think it would be better for the slaves and for the slaveholders too. The abolitionists have helped me a great deal.

PATRICK SNEAD.

I belonged in Savannah, Georgia. I am as white as my master was, but I was born a slave. My first master dying, I fell to one of the sons, who died when I was about fifteen. He was a sporting character. He had always promised my mother to give me my freedom at some time, — as soon as I could take care of myself. I was sent to school a little while by mother, so that I could spell quite well, — but I have lost it all. My master gave me no religious instruction, but I was allowed to attend a Sunday School for colored children. I was put to the cooper's trade, which I learned in five years. While my master lived I was well used. But at length he was taken sick with consumption; I attended him, and took care of him. I said nothing to him about my freedom, not feeling any great interest in the matter at that time. I have good reason to believe that he was persuaded not to set me free. At length he departed this life.

After his death, the doctor's bill of three hundred dollars had to be satisfied out of the estate. Other property being deficient, I was given up, and was for one day the property of the physician. I was then sold to a wholesale merchant for five hundred dollars. The

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merchant employed me about the store four years; he found me smarter than many others, and I had to work hard, lifting heavy bales of goods. This lifting caused me to wear a truss some time before I left. In the easiest time of the year, the summer, my working hours were from 6 in the morning to 7 in the evening. In the fall and spring I worked from 6 in the morning until 12 at night, the bales of goods being opened in the night: in the winter from 6 to 6. I had plenty of food and good common clothing. The merchant's manner of address to me was generally pleasant: I had the privilege of going to church on Sundays, if I pleased.

He never on Saturday nights allowed me any money: I liked female society as well as he did, and wanted some spending money. I was not provoked to ask for it by seeing others have money, but I felt that I ought to be allowed something for my encouragement, after performing so much hard labor. His answer was, that he gave me enough to eat. I told him that he would have to sell me, "for to work in this way I shall not." He grinned and bore it.

About a year before this I had been attentive to a young free-woman who lived with her aunt. One evening, on leaving, the aunt cautioned me to tell Billy (a boy on the place) to fasten the gate after me, as the night before he had left it open. Accordingly, on coming out, I said, "Billy, be careful to fasten the gate, for you did not fasten it the night before." There was, as I afterwards learned, a white man concealed behind a tree close by,—he heard me, and fancied that what I said was meant to hit him in some way; for he meanwhile was, unbeknown to me, sustaining a peculiar relation to the very girl that I was visiting. The next day that man said he would buy me, if it cost him a

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thousand dollars, so that he could give me a hundred lashes. My master heard of this threat, — I heard of it, and believe I told my master. Some days after I met the man, told him what I had heard, — that it was a mistake, — that I did not know he was behind the tree, or that he had any thing to do with the person I was visiting, and that I would not be in his way any further. So it blew over.

After my talk with my master about the money, he, remembering the affair just mentioned, went to that party, and offered to sell me to him. Then the same man who had made the threat to buy me, asked me if I was willing to belong to him. I told him I would as lief belong to him as to anybody, if he would allow me a living chance. He told me that he would hire me out at my trade of coopering, and provide me with tools. He bought me — giving for me a woman and two children, and a hundred dollars. I went to work as he had promised. My task was eighteen barrels a week: I could make more than twice as many, so then I began to have money. My treatment was good.

I went on in this way four years; then my colored employer was going to Liberia, with a ship load of emigrants — free people of color. He bade me goodby, and shook my hands; at this I felt an anxious wish to go with him, and from that moment I felt what liberty was. I then told him, that I hoped one day to be my own man, and if so, that I wished to go to Liberia. He said, "I hope so, my son." He had baptized me, and was pastor of the church to which I belonged. After he left, I went on working nearly one year more, with his partner, who had bought him out.

During this time my desire for liberty grew stronger and stronger. I had spent my money as I went along.

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My master refused to buy me new tools after my old ones were worn out — said I dressed better than he, and must buy tools for myself. I thought this ought not to do, and I made up my mind, "it sha' n't do either." I had now come to a resolution, and I started for a land of liberty. I left in July, 1851, at 3 on a Monday morning. I reached Canada safely, and had no difficulty until two years had elapsed. Then I was employed in the summer of 1853 as a waiter in the Cataract House, on the American side of the Falls. Then a constable of Buffalo came in, on Sunday after dinner, and sent the barkeeper into the dining-room for me. I went into the hall, and met the constable, — I had my jacket in my hand, and was going to put it up. He stepped up to me. "Here, Watson," (this was the name I assumed on escaping,) "you waited on me, and I 'll give you some change." His fingers were then in his pocket, and he dropped a quarter dollar on the floor. I told him, "I have not waited on you — you must be mistaken in the man, and I don 't want another waiter's money." He approached, — I suspected, and stepped back toward the dining-room door. By that time he made a grab at me, caught me by the collar of my shirt and vest, — then four more constables, he had brought with him, sprung on me, — they dragged me to the street door — there was a jam — I hung on by the doorway. The head constable shackled my left hand. I had on a new silk cravat twice round my neck; he hung on to this, twisting it till my tongue lolled out of my mouth, but he could not start me through the door. By this time the waiters pushed through the crowd, — there were three hundred visitors there at the time, — and Smith and Grave, colored waiters, caught me by the hands, — then the others

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came on, and dragged me from the officers by main force. They dragged me over chairs and every thing, down to the ferry way. I got into the cars, and the waiters were lowering me down, when the constables came and stopped them, saying, "Stop that murderer!" —they called me a *murderer!* Then I was dragged down the steps by the waiters, and flung into the ferry boat. The boatmen rowed me to within fifty feet of the Canada shore—into Canada water—when the head boatman in the other boat gave the word to row back. They did accordingly,—but they could not land me at the usual place on account of the waiters. So they had to go down to Suspension Bridge; they landed me, opened a way through the crowd—shackled me, pushed me into a carriage, and away we went. The head constable then asked me "if I knew any person in Lockport." I told him "no." Then, "In Buffalo?" "No." "Well, then," said he, "let's go to Buffalo—Lockport is too far." We reached Buffalo at ten o'clock at night, when I was put in jail. I told the jailer I wished he would be so good as to tell lawyer —— to come round to the jail. Mr. —— came, and I engaged him for my lawyer. When the constables saw that, pretending to know no one in Buffalo, I had engaged one of the best lawyers in the place, they were astonished. I told them that "as scared as they thought I was, I wanted them to know that I had my senses about me." The court was not opened until nine days; the tenth day my trial commenced. The object was, to show some evidence as if of murder, so that they could take me to *Baltimore.* On the eleventh day the claimant was defeated, and I was cleared at 10, A. M. After I was cleared, and while I was yet in the court room, a telegraphic despatch came from a Judge in Savannah,

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saying that I was no murderer, but a fugitive slave. However, before a new warrant could be got out, I was in a carriage and on my way. I crossed over into Canada, and walked thirty miles to the Clifton House.

This broke up my summer's work at the Falls, and threw me back; and as I had to pay money to my lawyer, I have hardly got over it yet.

There is great difference in the modes of treating slaves on the plantations, according to the character of the owners, — I have seen enough of slave life to know this, and I have seen slaves in Savannah used as badly as any on the plantation. I saw a man in Savannah, who had been whipped severely, and thrust into a dark hole or dungeon in a cellar. The maggots got in his flesh, and he was offensive to the sense in consequence. When they turned him out, I saw the man, and saw the maggots in his flesh. I knew a Methodist minister, on —— Street, who had a colored woman for cook. Something which her mistress told her to cook did not suit. The mistress complained to the minister; he shut up the cook in a stable or barn and beat her, having first tied something over her mouth.

At one time, I resided with the family in the jail-building. While there, I used to see whipping, five or six a day, or more, with a large cowskin. It is the most common thing in the world to have them whipped in the jail, — that will be no news in Savannah, — not over thirty-nine lashes in one day, by law. Sometimes slaves are whipped in the guard-house.

I consider that the slaves in Savannah, where I was born and raised, are poor ignorant creatures: they don't know their condition. It is ignorance that keeps them there. If they knew what I know, they could not be kept there a moment. Let a man escape, and have but

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a month's freedom, and he will feel the greatest animosity against slavery. I can't give slavery any name or description bad enough for it.

CHARLES PEYTON LUCAS.

My name in slavery was Peyton Lucas; I changed my name in running, to Charles Bentley.

I was raised in Leesburg, Loudon county, Va. My master never sent me to school, nor gave me any instruction from the Bible, excepting one passage of Scripture which he used to quote to me, — "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." He was a Baptist Minister — and after he had quoted the text, he would take me to the barn-yard and give me a practical explanation with raw hides. My mistress used to beat me over the head with a dairy key about as big as a child's fist.

I was kept mostly at the quarters until twelve or thirteen, wearing nothing in the summer but a coarse crocus shirt. Many a time have I taken it by the two ends, and pulled it round a post to break down the sticks. When I was taken to the house, my mistress used to find fault with me before him. "Oh, I can't stand this!" Then he would give me a kick or two in the house, then take me to the barn-yard, and finish it off with the cowskin. Both before and after, he would reason with me, — "now, you know better than to aggravate your mistress as you do, for you 've often heard me read, "He that knoweth," etc. I used to hear him preach. While the whipping was going on and he was

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